

**Testimony of Elizabeth Pelletier, Senator of Student Government Association at Eastern Connecticut State University, to members of the Appropriations Committee**

*February 24, 2014*

Members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Elizabeth Pelletier and I am a Student Government Association Senator and Sophomore at Eastern Connecticut State University. Good evening and thank you for this chance to voice my concerns to you. Ever since I was small, I dreamed of going to college and getting an education that would carry me where I wanted to go. Today, that dream is to achieve a Doctorate in Psychology, and hopefully move on to serve in higher education. I've always been one for lofty goals. I'm sure you all here are ambitious and understand where I'm coming from. The way we reach our goals is by practical application and sleepless nights. We all know that the hard work and growth that come with an education are irreplaceable. As a first generation college student from a modest background, Eastern is my pathway to success. Without a public education, I don't know where I would be right now. I'd probably be attending school, but I'd definitely be deeper in debt. You all know how powerful and often frightening money, or rather lack of money can be. Currently, Eastern is giving me an outstanding education I can be proud of.

However, that quality education is highly supported by the funding given to us by you. Without that, the value and reputation that comes with an Eastern degree is at stake. Everything that makes us great, what supports the students day in and day out, could be lost. If funding for higher education is reduced, it won't just affect the number on my bill. It would be seriously detrimental to the campus as a whole, the faculty, services and facilities that make Eastern the gem it is. A public education is the only option for a lot of students, so we should make it the best it possibly can be. Eastern has afforded me and many others the opportunities necessary to succeed.

By gathering here this evening, we're all saying that we care about the future of the 92,000 students who are positively influenced by higher education. Graduates from the ConnSCU have the potential to go on to do exponentially bright things. Part of our success, is out of our control. It lies in your hands. We're building something with education. We're building something that goes beyond academics. We're building ourselves into better humans, neighbors, and citizens. I can say with complete honesty of mind and heart that my appreciation for the education I'm so lucky to have will continue well into my future. Please, do whatever you can to help us maintain the quality education we've come to love. Thank you for listening, I sincerely hope that we can make Connecticut better.